

Montclair/West Orange Radium Contamination

Various Locations Montclair & West Orange Townships

Essex County

BLOCK: Various **LOT:** Various

Community Relations Coordinator: Karen Kloo (609) 777-1971

SITE DESCRIPTION/RESOLUTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS:

The site encompasses more than 460 suburban residential properties in Montclair and West Orange that were contaminated with radioactive waste materials. The contamination is believed to have originated from a former radium processing facility in the nearby City of Orange during the early 1900s. Process waste soil generated at the facility was used as fill at the properties before the residences were constructed. In 1983, NJDEP detected elevated levels of gamma radiation and radon gas emanating from soil adjacent to and beneath the housing structures at various properties. Similar contamination was detected at properties in nearby Glen Ridge Borough that had received radioactive soil from the same source. USEPA added the Montclair/West Orange sites to the National Priorities List of Superfund sites (NPL) in 1985.

In 1989 and 1990, after completing a Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS), USEPA issued two Records of Decision (ROD) with NJDEP concurrence that required removal and off-site disposal of radiologically-contaminated soil from all affected properties. During this process, USEPA prepared Remedial Designs for affected properties in groups that related to their location in the two townships. After USEPA completed the necessary design work for each group it began remedial actions at these properties. In 1997, the 441 properties that were initially identified as contaminated had been remediated; however, USEPA subsequently discovered additional properties that required remediation. USEPA removed the radium-contaminated soil from beneath the streets between 1999 and 2002. The final phase of soil removal at residential properties will begin in 2003 and is scheduled to be completed in 2005. USEPA is conducting a Remedial Investigation to determine whether contaminants from the soil have entered the ground water.